

VZCZCXRO3349
OO RUEHPB
DE RUEHSV #0528/01 3341935
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 301935Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3495
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1409
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 1002
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1190
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 0627
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SUVA 000528

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [FJ](#)
SUBJECT: FIJI UPDATE 12/1: PRESIDENT STATEMENT ON RULE OF
LAW; BAINIMARAMA MEETING WITH PRES; SUVA CALM FOR RUGBY
MATCH; EAC UPDATES PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

REF: SUVA 527

Classified By: Amb. Dinger. Sec. 1.4 (B,D).

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) President Iloilo issued a statement reaffirming his belief in rule of law, seemingly contradicting a claim by RFMF Commander Bainimarama last week. In a meeting today (12/1), Bainimarama and Iloilo reportedly discussed the recent Wellington meeting and did not discuss the future. Police Commissioner Hughes has not quit. PM Qarase refuses to resign, and has publicly questioned Bainimarama's sanity. Today's army-police rugby match has Bainimarama's attention. Media releases on a phone call between U/S Burns and PM Qarase and on a letter from HIRC Chairman Hyde to Bainimarama are receiving play. An Embassy EAC meeting today proposed adjustments to the warden notice and public announcement. End summary.

President Iloilo affirms support for "rule of law"

[¶2.](#) (U) In a media statement following PM Qarase's public address yesterday (11/30), President Iloilo publicly reaffirmed his support for the Constitution, rule of law, and parliamentary democracy in Fiji. He said it is his fervent expectation and abiding hope that current differences will be resolved constitutionally, for the sake of Fiji. (Note: after a meeting between the two last week, Bainimarama claimed Iloilo had given him a "green light" for a coup.)

Bainimarama-Iloilo meeting: no mention of coup plan

[¶3.](#) (C) Bainimarama met with President Iloilo again this morning (12/1). Vice President Madraiwiwi told us afterward that the conversation consisted entirely of Bainimarama giving the President a read-out from the Wellington meeting on Wednesday, all from the Commodore's perspective. Asked if the "clean up" plan was mentioned, Madraiwiwi said there was no discussion of the future at all.

No quit in Police Commissioner

[¶4.](#) (U) Police Commissioner Hughes, on leave in Australia, informed the media that, despite rumors he has resigned under stress, he is happy and intends to remain in his job. He said he continues to communicate with police leadership in the meantime.

PM questions Bainimarama sanity

[¶5.](#) (U) PM Qarase, on a visit in Fiji's West, sounded subdued

in media interviews, while awaiting developments. He reconfirmed he will not resign in the face of Bainimarama's threats. Qarase told one interviewer "it should be obvious" after last night's media interview that Bainimarama is "deranged and mentally unstable." The CEO in the PM's office, Jioji Kotabalavu, is at work in Suva. He and his staff reportedly appear resigned to being removed.

Rugby match for healing?

16. (U) As of COB, Suva remains calm. Police are present in force. Some shops closed at noon; others remained open. The annual Army-Police rugby match, the Ratu Sukuna Bowl, seems the focus of Bainimarama's attention. He reportedly told media he hopes an after-match kava (ceremonial brew) session will help patch up frayed relations between military and police.

U.S. messages getting media play

17. (U) A media release on the phone call this a.m. between U/S Burns and PM Qarase is receiving play, as is a release conveying the contents of a letter from HIRC Chairman Hyde to Bainimarama.

EAC bumps up notices

18. (C) We held another EAC meeting in the a.m. and proposed adjustments to our warden message and public announcement to accent Bainimarama's reconfirmation that today is decision day and to add focus on Suva, where most initial "clean up" activities are likely to take place and where most RFMF troops are stationed. A test of any coup will be how the

SUVA 00000528 002 OF 002

various elements in the RFMF respond. If there were a split in the ranks -- not expected but one never knows -- then Suva could be dicey. Otherwise, we would expect the RFMF to ensure adequate security, at least initially, since the police are under instruction not to challenge armed military forces. With Washington clearance, we issued the revised warden message in late a.m. Washington will process the public announcement.
DINGER